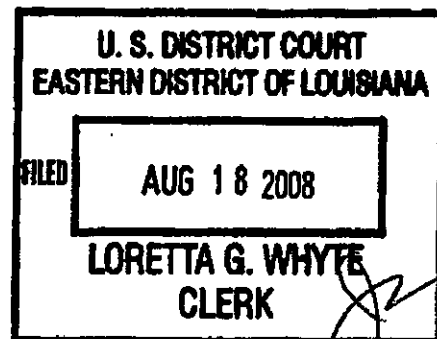


UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA \* CRIMINAL DOCKET NO. 08-165  
v. \* SECTION: "I"  
LAFETE TUCKER \*  
JANICE GARDNER \*  
a/k/a Janice Fultz \*  
a/k/a Janice King \*  
GREGORY VERNON \*

\* \* \*

FACTUAL BASIS

If this case were to proceed to trial, the United States would prove beyond a reasonable doubt, through credible testimony and reliable evidence, the following facts:

LAFETE TUCKER, defendant herein, was a former client service manager ("CSM") employed by the Louisiana Workforce Investment Act - District 20 ("LWIA") which includes Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana until approximately 2006. He was also the owner/operator/director of Tucker's Career Counseling ("TCC") and the Magnified Youth Center ("MYC"), a social services facility in Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana offering tutoring, study skills training and recreation to children.

\_\_\_ Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Process \_\_\_\_\_  
☒ Dktd \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ CtRmDep \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Doc. No. \_\_\_\_\_

JANICE GARDNER, defendant herein, was a former client service manager employed by the LWIA until approximately 2003. She was also the owner/operator/director of Doris J's, d/b/a Building Blocks Early Learning Center ("BBELC"), a childcare facility.

GREGORY VERNON, defendant herein, was a former client service manager employed by LWIA until approximately 2004. Defendant GREGORY VERNON was also an independent contractor who provided counseling services for LAFETE TUCKER at the MYC.

LWIA is a local governmental agency controlled by the State of Louisiana through the Tangipahoa Parish School Board and funded by the Employment and Training Administration division of the United States Department of Labor ("ETA"). The LWIA provides needy individuals with job skills, work experience and supportive services such as childcare and transportation.

LWIA's federally funded benefits are administered by their CSMs who are also empowered to negotiate contracts with "Providers." Providers are fee based social service businesses. Providers submit Request for Payment Vouchers ("vouchers") to LWIA and the Louisiana Department of Social Services ("DSS") for services rendered. These vouchers are reimbursed with federal funds from the ETA and the United States Department of Health and Human Services ("USDHHS").

Using USDHHS funding through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families ("TANF") block grant to the DSS, the DSS offers clients supportive services such as parenting training, student counseling and childcare assistance delivered by means of a "Quality Childcare Initiative Contract" ("Contract").

Providers are required to attest that the vouchers they submit to LWIA and DSS are true and correct. CSMs are entrusted with ensuring that vouchers submitted by Providers are true and correct before authorizing their payment.

**LAFETE TUCKER**

Defendant, LAFETE TUCKER, in his capacity as a CSM, was an agent of LWIA. As owner/operator/director of TCC which had a Contract to operate the MYC, TUCKER was also a Provider. TUCKER, as owner/operator/director of the MYC, was required to submit vouchers to DSS indicating the monthly Contract related costs of the MYC to receive federal reimbursement. Defendant, LAFETE TUCKER, signed these vouchers attesting that the information contained therein was true and correct. As a Provider, defendant LAFETE TUCKER, unlawfully received \$103,572.14 through fraudulent vouchers he submitted to LWIA for services which were never rendered.

**Defendant LAFETE TUCKER and the Scheme to Defraud DSS - Submission of False Vouchers to DSS**

Between approximately September, 2002 through September, 2005, defendant LAFETE TUCKER, d/b/a TCC, operated the MYC. TCC received a USDHHS Contract which was funded by the TANF block grant designated for and administered by DSS to develop and maintain the MYC. Defendant LAFETE TUCKER, in concert with others, including but not limited to "J.T.", willfully and knowingly made materially false statements and representations on vouchers he submitted to DSS, which vouchers were funded by the TANF block grant, on behalf of the MYC to obtain payments for services not rendered and expenses not incurred.

In or about November, 2003, the defendant LAFETE TUCKER, in concert with "J.T.", signed and submitted a false and fraudulent request for payment voucher of \$2,000 to DSS on behalf of the MYC for services allegedly rendered by "J.T.", which were never rendered. On or about November 14, 2003, defendant LAFETE TUCKER, in concert with "J.T.," issued TCC check no.

1523 for \$2,000 payable to "J.T." On or about December 11, 2003, TCC check no. 1523 for \$2,000 was cashed at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana and the proceeds taken by the defendant, LAFETE TUCKER. The monetary loss to DSS associated with defendant LAFETE TUCKER's submission of fraudulent vouchers was \$10,200.00.

**JANICE GARDNER**

Defendant JANICE GARDNER, as owner/operator/director of BBELC which had Contracts through her "Parents and Children Together" ("PACT") program, was also a Provider. PACT was designed to assist low income parents with the development of their child's language, social, intellectual and physical skills. As a Provider, defendant JANICE GARDNER unlawfully received \$22,850.00 through fraudulent vouchers she submitted to LWIA for services which were never rendered.

**Defendant, JANICE GARDNER, "PACT" and the Scheme to Defraud DSS - Submission of False Vouchers to DSS**

Defendant JANICE GARDNER, as owner of BBELC, received USDHHS funding through the TANF block grant designated for and administered by DSS. The DSS budget on the Contract for PACT was funded by the TANF block grant and included funds for the purchase of computers and office equipment.

From approximately October, 2003 through September, 2005, defendant JANICE GARDNER, in concert with others including but not limited to the owner of PT Rentals ("PT"), submitted vouchers to DSS seeking and obtaining reimbursement from DSS, which was funded by the TANF block grant, for computers allegedly leased from PT when, in fact, such computers were

never leased from PT.

Defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote several checks drawn on BBELC allegedly to pay PT for equipment/computer rentals. These checks were never tendered to PT but instead, were deposited by GARDNER into her personal and business bank accounts. More specifically, defendant JANICE GARDNER, in concert with others, including but not limited to the owner of PT, submitted fraudulent vouchers to DSS claiming expenses for the alleged lease of computers and office equipment from PT and was reimbursed for same when, in fact, the computers and office equipment were never leased at all. The monetary loss to DSS, which was funded by the TANF block grant, associated with defendant JANICE GARDNER's submission of fraudulent vouchers was \$55,636.00.

To further conceal this fraud and knowing she was already under federal investigation, defendant JANICE GARDNER, in concert with others, asked the owner of PT to falsely advise agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that defendant JANICE GARDNER had actually leased the computers and office equipment from PT and to present phony invoices to the agents in support thereof.

On approximately November 14, 2003, defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote a temporary check for \$1,363.00, drawn on her "Doris J's/BBELC" business account at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana payable to PT. On or about November 26, 2003, defendant JANICE GARDNER deposited this same check for \$1,363.00 into her "Doris J's/BBELC" account no. 011064 at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana.

On or about December 10, 2003, defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote check no. 2501

for \$1,363.00, drawn on her "Doris J's/BBELC" business account at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana payable to PT. On or about December 19, 2003, defendant JANICE GARDNER deposited this same check for \$1,363.00 into her "Janice King d/b/a Mr. Boo's Grocery" account no. 0112062 at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana.

On or about March 10, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote check no. 2551 for \$4,089.00, drawn on her "Doris J's/BBELC" business account at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana payable to PT. On or about March 12, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER deposited this same check into her "Janice King d/b/a Mr. Boo's Grocery" account no. 0112062 at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana.

On or about July 20, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote check no. 2621 for \$1,363.00, drawn on her "Doris J's/BBELC" business account at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana payable to PT. On or about July 23, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER deposited this same check into her account at Hancock Bank in Mississippi.

On or about July 20, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER wrote check no. 2614 for \$4,089.00, drawn on her "Doris J's/BBELC" business account at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana payable to PT. On or about July 23, 2004, defendant JANICE GARDNER deposited this same check into her "Janice King d/b/a Mr. Boo's Grocery" account no. 0112062 at People's Bank in Tangipahoa, Louisiana.

**GREGORY VERNON**

Defendant GREGORY VERNON, in his capacity as a CSM, was an agent of LWIA. As an independent contractor supplying counseling services to the MYC under its Contract,

defendant GREGORY VERNON was also a Provider. As a Provider, defendant GREGORY VERNON, unlawfully received \$44,500.00 through fraudulent vouchers he submitted to DSS for counseling services he did not render.

**Defendant GREGORY VERNON and the Scheme to Defraud LWIA - Kickbacks for Approval of Falsified Childcare Vouchers**


Between approximately 2000 - 2005, defendant GREGORY VERNON was a CSM entrusted with reviewing, verifying and approving payment of all childcare vouchers submitted to LWIA. This responsibility included the review, verification and approval of childcare vouchers submitted to LWIA by Cribs to Crayons Early Learning Center ("Cribs to Crayons"), a daycare facility owned and operated by Shirley Freeman. In violation of his duty, defendant GREGORY VERNON approved and obtained reimbursement for childcare vouchers submitted by Cribs to Crayons to LWIA for the benefit of Shirley Freeman knowing they contained materially false statements in some cases and were duplicate vouchers in other cases. As a reward for his approval of the fraudulent and duplicate vouchers submitted by Cribs to Crayons, defendant GREGORY VERNON received a series of monetary kickbacks from Shirley Freeman which ensured his continued participation in the scheme.

In approximately April, 2004, the defendant GREGORY VERNON accepted "DLA" check no. 1652 dated April 15, 2004 for \$1,380 from Shirley Freeman. In approximately May, 2004, the defendant GREGORY VERNON accepted "DLA" check no. 1613 dated May 5, 2004 for \$1,260 from Shirley Freeman. In approximately August, 2004, the defendant GREGORY VERNON accepted "DLA" check no. 1531 dated August 20, 2004 for \$1,452.00 from Shirley Freeman. In approximately September, 2004, the defendant GREGORY VERNON accepted "DLA" check no.

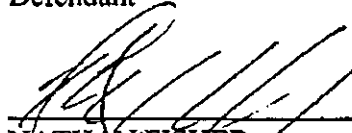
1795 dated September 11, 2004 for \$1,540 from Shirley Freeman. In approximately January, 2005, the defendant GREGORY VERNON accepted "DLA" check no. 1923 dated January 12, 2005 for \$1,732 from Shirley Freeman.

In summary, the evidence introduced at trial would establish all of the elements of the offense and prove the defendants' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

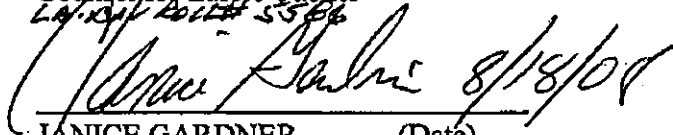
READ AND APPROVED:

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
LAFETE TUCKER (Date)  
Defendant

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL M. SIMPSON (Date)  
Assistant U.S. Attorney


 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
NATHAN FISHER (Date)  
Counsel for Lafayette Tucker  
*Laf. Tucker SS 8/18/08*

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RICHARD R. PICKENS, II (Date)  
Assistant U.S. Attorney

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JANICE GARDNER (Date)  
Defendant

 08/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ARTHUR HARRIS (Date)  
Counsel for Janice Gardner

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
GREGORY VERNON (Date)  
Defendant

 8/18/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ANTHONY BERTUCCI (Date)  
Counsel for Gregory Vernon